



MEMORANDUM

Subject: Historic Preservation Zone (HPZ) Windows Technical Standards Manual Text Amendment (Citywide)

Page: 1 of 3

Issue – This is a proposal on a draft text amendment to the Technical Standards Manual in regards to enabling each HPZ Advisory Board the option to amend their design guidelines so that when reviewing plans for replacing historic windows, they may consider substitute materials on a case-by-case basis (see Attachment A for details).

Staff Recommendation – Staff recommends approval of the Historic Preservation Zone (HPZ) Windows Technical Standards Manual Text Amendment.

Background – Windows are often among the character-defining features of historic buildings. In the language of the National Register of Historic Places, historic windows contribute to the “integrities” of buildings—their abilities to visually convey their historical significance. “Historic windows” may be original, or replacements that are 50 or more years old and are now part of the historic building fabric. In both national and local historic preservation standards, repair is the preferred treatment for all historic windows.

Currently the City of Tucson’s, Technical Standards, Section 9.02.3.9, Details, as well as the design guidelines for each of the City’s Historic Preservation Zones, stipulate that if historic windows cannot be repaired they must be replaced with the same material (e.g., “like for like” wood for wood, metal for metal) and type (e.g., single-hung, double-hung, casement). To the degree possible, replacements should have the same character-defining features as the existing windows (e.g., proportions, grid pattern of lights, muntin widths and profiles, ogee lugs, sills).

Tucson’s sunny climate is especially hard on all-wood windows, especially those facing west. Even when they are frequently repainted and repaired, they may deteriorate relatively rapidly and need to be replaced more often than metal windows or all-wood windows facing other directions. In addition, they often don’t meet rescue-opening or energy-efficiency requirements in building codes. For these reasons, and to reduce long-term maintenance costs, there is now more flexibility on replacement window materials for projects that have federal funding or tax credits.

In 2014, during a consultation with the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office (AZ SHPO) on a project to rehabilitate a downtown National Register-eligible building using Low Income Housing Tax Credits allocated by the Arizona Department of Housing, the AZ SHPO clarified that for projects using funding or tax credits from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), SHPOs across the country have generally relaxed their interpretation of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standard #6 for Rehabilitation, which references replacement of deteriorated features (Attachment B: email from Robert Frankberger, SHPO Architect, 9-5-2014). The relaxation is made allowable in the Standard #6 phrase: “... the new feature will match the old, in design, color, texture, and, *where possible, materials.*”

The AZ SHPO also pointed out the policy of the federal Rehabilitation Income Tax Credit program, which is perhaps the most stringent, that windows above the first floor may use substitute material based in the notion that it won't be visually noticeable. This policy emphasizes the principle that authentic appearance is more important than authentic material. Following these rationales and precedents, most SHPOs are now approving metal-clad wood windows to replace historic all-wood windows, as long as the appearance of the historic windows is well matched.

In 2015 the West University Historic Zone Advisory Board (WUHZAB) contacted the City of Tucson Historic Preservation Office to inquire about the possibility of revising their design guidelines to allow them to consider metal-clad wood windows for replacing all-wood windows. The WUHZAB was informed of the AZ SHPO policy allowing metal-clad wood windows for HUD-funded projects and some federal tax credit projects, and they arranged for a window manufacturer's presentation of a currently available aluminum-clad wood window product that they found acceptable. The Plans Review Subcommittee of the Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission then discussed the issue and requested clarification from the City Historic Preservation staff on how it would be possible to change the UDC and HPZ design guidelines to allow consideration of substitute materials for window replacements (currently limited to metal-clad wood windows). Staff consulted with the City Attorney's Office and reported back that the simplest way to achieve this goal would be a text amendment in the windows section of the HPZ Technical Standards (Section 9.02.3.9) that apply to all HPZs, enabling each HPZ Advisory Board to amend their design guidelines to allow consideration of substitute materials for window replacements.

The process for this amendment to the Technical Standards Manual will be reviewed by the City Development Review Committee (CDRC) and the Planning and Development Services Department (PDSD) Director for a recommendation. That recommendation will be forwarded to the City Manager who may approve, deny, remand the proposed amendment to the director of the initiating department for further review, or forward the proposed amendment to the Mayor and Council for consideration and action.

Present Consideration(s) – Pursuant to the request from the PDSD Director, staff prepared the following draft amendments (see Attachment A for more details on proposed amendments):

1. To enable each HPZ Advisory Board the option to amend their design guidelines to allow the consideration substitute materials for window replacements on a case-by-case basis.

Summary – Windows are often among the character-defining features of historic buildings. In the language of the National Register of Historic Places, historic windows contribute to the “integrity” of buildings—their abilities to visually convey their historical significance. Due to Tucson's sunny climate and its deleterious effect on all-wood windows, staff is seeking to enable HPZ Advisory Boards the option to amend their design guidelines to allow the consideration of substitute materials for window replacements, on a case-by-case, as long as, to the degree possible, the replacements have the same character-defining features as the windows they are replacing.

Current Regulation – When an HPZ Advisory Board is reviewing plans for replacing historic windows, if they cannot be repaired, the windows must be replaced with the same

material (e.g., “like for like” wood for wood, metal for metal) and type (e.g., single-hung, double-hung, casement).

Proposed Revision – Enabling each HPZ Advisory Board the option to amend their design guidelines so that when reviewing plans for replacing historic windows, they may consider substitute materials on a case-by-case basis.

Authorized:


City Manager


Date

MR/db

PDSD

Attachments:

Attachment A – Proposed Redlined UDC Technical Standards Text Amendment for HPZ Windows

Attachment B – Email from SHPO window replacements

Attachment C – Legal Action Report from August 18, 2016 Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission Plans Review Subcommittee

Attachment D – CDRC Report for HPZ Windows